

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01054 101525Z POSS DUPE
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9899

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1054

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK, BC
SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS TO AMBASSADORS TO INFORM NATIONALIST LEADERS
AND FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS ON RHODESIAN CONSULTATIONS

REF: STATE 104968

1. SUMMARY: I DELIVERED DRAFT TEXT TRANSMITTED REFTEL TO
PRESIDENT KHAMA MORNING MAY10. WITH HIM WERE MINEXTAFF
MOGWE, CABINET SECRETARY STEENKAMP, PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY
LEGWAILA AND EXTAFF DEPUTY PERMSEC MOGAMI. LIVELY AND
INTERESTING EXCHANGE OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FOLLOWED.
END SUMMARY.

2. DRAWING FROM GUIDANCE IN REFTEL, I MADE A NUMBER OF
SUPPLEMENTARY POINTS. PRESIDENT KHAMA EXPRESSED INTEREST
IN FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. WHO WOULD BE USG OFFICIAL NAMED TO WORK WITH UK
GROUP?

B. FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN HAD STRESSED TO PRESIDENT
KHAMA GREAT IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO USG PARTICIPATION,
AND IT WAS PRESIDENT'S IMPRESSION THAT THIS MEANT US CO-
SPONSORSHIP (BUT NOT CHAIRING) OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL
CONFERENCE. IN VIEW OF OWEN'S ATTITUDE, WAS IT
NKOMO'S STATED OBJECTION TO US PARTICIPATION THAT
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CAUSED CONFERENCE IDEA TO BE SHELVED FOR THE MOMENT?
I ASSURED PRESIDENT THAT BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS HAD
BEEN CONSIDERED A VIABLE OPTION WELL BEFORE NKOMO'S
STATEMENTS, AND THAT IN ANY CASE THEY SEEMED A LOGICAL
AND NECESSARY PRELIMINARY TO ANY CONFERENCE. I ADDED
THAT SINCE CONFERENCE WAS NOT BEING CONVENED AT THIS
TIME, QUESTION OF US CO-SPONSORSHIP DID NOT ENTER INTO

IT, AND THAT THE MATTER WAS BEING LEFT OPEN FOR NOW.

C. BOTH PRESIDENT AND MOGWE WONDERED WHETHER TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT (RIGHT BEFORE LUANDA MEETING) WAS OPTIMUM, OR WHETHER IT MIGHT PROVOKE EVEN MORE ACRIMONIOUS DISCUSSION AND HARDENED POSITIONS BY THOSE INTERESTED IN FAILURE OF US/UK INITIATIVES. DID US AND UK FEEL, PRESIDENT ASKED, THAT THEIR PARTICIPATION AT LUANDA WOULD HELP TO DAMP THIS EFFECT? MOGWE ADDED THAT HE COULD SEE ADVANTAGE OF BRIEFING NATIONALIST LEADERS PRIOR TO LUANDA, BUT EXPRESSED PERSONAL FEARS THAT NKOMO MIGHT BE AFRAID TO COMMIT HIMSELF WITHOUT MUGABE, LEST HE BE CAUGHT TOO FAR OUT IN FRONT.

D. PRESIDENT ASKED IF EVENTUAL CONFERENCE, AS WELL AS PRELIMINARY CONSULTATIONS, WOULD INCLUDE ALL NATIONALISTS AND NOT ONLY PATRIOTIC FRONT. I DREW FROM PARA 6 (N OF REFTTEL).

E. CONCERNING FUTURE CONFERENCE, PRESIDENT ALSO ASKED IF, CONTRARY TO TRADITION, ANOTHER COUNTRY (U.S) WOULD BE PARTICIPATING WITH COLONIAL POWER AND TERRITORY CONCERNED IN DRAWING UP CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE. "MIND YOU, I'M NOT OPPOSED TO THIS," HE ADDED. (I FIELDLED THIS ONE WITH THE HELP OF PARAS 6 (I) AND (J).

F. GENERAL INTEREST WAS EXPRESSED IN WHETHER WE HAD INDICATIONS OF REACTION FROM NATIONALIST LEADERS OR OTHER FRONT LINE STATES. I REPLIED THAT THE ONLY REACTION I HAD SEEN THUS FAR WAS FAVORABLE, FROM SITOLE AND MUZAREWA.

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3. REMAINDER OF RATHER LENGTHY MEETING WAS DEVOTED TO FREE-WHEELING SPECULATION ON WHETHER AMBASSADOR YOUNG WOULD BE ADMITTED TO SOUTH AFRICA (CONSENSUS: HE WOULD, FOLLOWING SOME TOUGH TALK BY PIK BOTHA); AND WHETHER ANC AND PAC ATTEMPTS TO HAVE SAG RULED ILLEGITIMATE ON GROUNDS OF POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION WERE VIABLE (ALL AGREED THAT ASSESSING LEGITIMACY ON SUCH CRITERIA WOULD OPEN A PANDORA'S BOX WHICH WOULD FIND MANY AFRICAN AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS HIGHLY VULNERABLE.)

4. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS ABIDJAN AND OTHER INTERESTED CAPITALS.
ALBERTI

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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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